

**From:** Sullivan, Jan (DPH)  
**Sent:** Monday, April 08, 2019 11:53 AM  
**To:** Wagner, Carolyn (DPH)  
**Subject:** FW: Wheelabrator PRR  
**Attachments:** WGBHResponse\_21Feb18 (3).docx

Please see below and attached.

***Jan Sullivan, Deputy Director  
Bureau of Environmental Health***  
Mass. Dept. of Public Health  
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Boston, MA 02108

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617 624-5757  
Cell: 617 620-8019

If you need immediate assistance for an emergency outside regular business hours, please call the Office of Preparedness and Emergency Response Duty Officer at 617 339-8351.

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**From:** Sullivan, Jan (DPH)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 21, 2018 3:46 PM  
**To:** Scales, Ann (DPH)  
**Cc:** Netreba, Brenda (DPH); Ferguson, Jana (DPH)  
**Subject:** FW: Inquiry about Saugus cancer study

Hi Ann,

Attached are answers to the WGBH reporter's questions on our Saugus report. Please let us know if you have any questions or need more information.

Thanks very much,  
Jan

***Jan Sullivan, Deputy Director  
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**From:** Scales, Ann (DPH)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 21, 2018 12:57 PM  
**To:** Sullivan, Jan (DPH)  
**Cc:** Netreba, Brenda (DPH)  
**Subject:** RE: Inquiry about Saugus cancer study

Thanks, Jan. Let's do that and see where we land.

Ann Scales  
Director of Media Relations  
Commissioner's Office  
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Blog: <http://publichealth.blog.state.ma.us>  
Follow us on [www.Twitter.com/MassDPH](https://www.Twitter.com/MassDPH)

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**From:** Sullivan, Jan (DPH)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 21, 2018 12:50 PM  
**To:** Scales, Ann (DPH)  
**Cc:** Netreba, Brenda (DPH)  
**Subject:** RE: Inquiry about Saugus cancer study

Thanks, Ann. We can draft answers to the reporter's questions. Perhaps we can provide him the answers in writing and see if they meet his needs.

*Jan Sullivan, Deputy Director  
Bureau of Environmental Health*  
Director, Community Assessment Program  
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**From:** Scales, Ann (DPH)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 21, 2018 12:47 PM  
**To:** Sullivan, Jan (DPH); Netreba, Brenda (DPH)  
**Subject:** FW: Inquiry about Saugus cancer study

Hi Jan, Brenda –

Please see WGBH's questions below.

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**From:** Craig LeMoult [[mailto:craig\\_lemoult@wgbh.org](mailto:craig_lemoult@wgbh.org)]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 21, 2018 12:42 PM  
**To:** Scales, Ann (DPH)  
**Subject:** RE: Inquiry about Saugus cancer study

Ann,

I have two main questions. The first relates to the geographic area studied. It appears that the study includes two Saugus census tracts (2081.02 and 2081.01) but does not include the communities in Revere directly across the Pines River from the site. Am I correct that this community was not included in the study? Why not?

Also, the conclusion states, "Overall, there does not seem to be an unusual pattern of cancer in the community of Saugus based on the information reviewed in this report." But two sentences later it says, "Statistically significant elevations were noted for two cancer types – brain and ONS cancers and testicular cancer." I'm wondering about the use of this report to support an extension of the ash landfill, when it includes that note about brain and ONS cancers and testicular cancer.

I'd ideally like to speak with someone about this in person.

Thanks,  
Craig LeMoult, WGBH  
617-300-2428

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**From:** Craig LeMoult [[mailto:craig\\_lemoult@wgbh.org](mailto:craig_lemoult@wgbh.org)]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 16, 2018 3:46 PM  
**To:** Scales, Ann (DPH)  
**Subject:** Inquiry about Saugus cancer study

Ann,

As I mentioned, I'm working on a story about the Wheelabrator Saugus ash landfill, and I'm interested in a report that Mass. DPH did in March of 2016 evaluating cancer incidence in Saugus. Here's a link to the report:

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/environmental-health/investigations/reports-mz/saugus.html>

I'd like to speak with someone from the DPH to better understand the findings of the report and its methodology. Please let me know if we might be able to set something up for early next week. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks,  
Craig LeMoult, WGBH  
617-300-2428

1. The first question relates to the geographic area studied. It appears that the study includes two Saugus census tracts (2081.02 and 2081.01) but does not include the communities in Revere directly across the Pines River from the site. Am I correct that this community was not included in the study? Why not?

The purpose of this evaluation was to address general concerns about the incidence of cancer in Saugus as a whole and in each of its census tracts. For this reason, the evaluation was limited to this geographic area.

It should be noted that this evaluation was a routine screening-type evaluation of cancer incidence rates in Saugus using data from the Massachusetts Cancer Registry. The report did not include an evaluation of the Wheelabrator facility itself.

The Bureau of Environmental Health receives many requests like this throughout the Commonwealth and we follow a protocol to evaluate the incidence of cancer within a community. This type of screening is not designed to be an epidemiological study that tests a hypothesis. It is used to review data routinely collected by the Massachusetts Cancer Registry. BEH has developed a fact sheet on cancer that you may find helpful:

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/environmental-health/cancer-in-ma-info-sheet.html>

Cancer incidence data is published by the MCR for 23 different cancer types for all 351 communities in the Commonwealth in its city and town supplement, available at [www.mass.gov/dph/mcr](http://www.mass.gov/dph/mcr). Additional cancer incidence data is available at the census tract level on the Massachusetts Environmental Public Health Tracking website at [www.mass.gov/dph/matracking](http://www.mass.gov/dph/matracking).

2. Also, the conclusion states, "Overall, there does not seem to be an unusual pattern of cancer in the community of Saugus based on the information reviewed in this report." But two sentences later it says, "Statistically significant elevations were noted for two cancer types – brain and ONS cancers and testicular cancer." I'm wondering about the use of this report to support an extension of the ash landfill, when it includes that note about brain and ONS cancers and testicular cancer.

In the Conclusion section of our report, we first state the overall conclusion and follow with some specific findings (i.e., even though two types of cancer were statistically significantly elevated, upon closer examination we did not conclude that an unusual pattern existed for these types of cancer). It is not unusual, throughout the Commonwealth, to find statistically significant elevations. Statistical significance alone does not necessarily imply public health significance. Determination of statistical significance is just one tool used to interpret cancer patterns. In evaluating statistically significant elevations, we also consider the ages at diagnosis, histology (cell type), geographic distribution of addresses at the time of diagnosis relative to population density, and available occupation information reported to the MCR at the time of diagnosis to assess whether the pattern might be unusual. This risk factor information is reviewed in

comparison to what would be expected based on the epidemiological literature for the specific type of cancer. Additionally, tobacco use history is reviewed for individuals diagnosed with a cancer type for which tobacco is an established risk factor.

Also, as we point out in the answer to your first question, this report is a screening-level evaluation of cancer incidence. It is not an evaluation of the Wheelabrator facility itself, nor was this part of the Department of Environmental Protection's permitting process.

DRAFT